

RULES

1. It's forbidden taking photos or recording except where the guide indicates you.
2. Animals are not allowed in the cave.
3. You cannot eat or drink inside the cave.

INTRODUCTION

We are in the natural monument of Ojo Guareña declared by Junta de Castilla y León in 1996.

Ojo Guareña caves are one of the longest existing caves in Spain, today we have surveyed more than 110 km of galleries. That's the result of the union of 14 interconnected caves, being San Bernabe's cave and the Hermitage one of them.

We are in one of the main entrances which is called the town hall room. This room was built in 1885 to be the meeting point for the mayors of Merindad de Sotoscueva. They used it until 1924 when they moved to the current town hall in Cornejo village. Before meeting here (town hall room) they did it at the top of the mountain around the holy oak, and later in the Hermitage where we can see the old municipality archive where the mayors keep the most important documents.

VIDEO

At this point we are going to see a video where we explain how the cave has been formed, we explain also the main galleries where the

turist can't enter to create a complete idea of Ojo Guareña and a part of the archeological remains we have been working since 1956, when we start the exploration.

BASINS OF THE SAINTS

We focus the explanation on the basins of the lowest part. Taking advantage of a fracture where the water can pass through they put the containers to collect it. Popular tradition considered the water leak in the cave a miracle.

The round basin has been placed here since 1950, while the square one has been inside the cave for several centuries.

There's a legend around that miracle water, people used to come here to wash their eyes, that's the way they wouldn't have vision problems.

FLOWSTONE

At this stop we can see how the continuity of the cave has been closed through stalagmitic flowstone caused by the filtration of rainwater through the limestone rock and the deposit of calcium carbonate until the continuity is completely closed from the gallery.

In the upper part of this flowstone we have found remains of a small bonfire. The analysis of these remains brings us an age of 13,500 years, so we have evidence of human presence in this place since Upper Paleolithic.

SILOS (GRAIN STORAGE)

The silos are constructions excavated by humans in the clay soils of the gallery by humans to preserve the grain inside. The silos are bell-shaped inside and narrow at the top, where they placed the Stone cover. It's Depth oscilates between 1.5 meters to 2.

Humans excavates that silos between 7th and 8th centuries, during the Visigothic period.

The reasons that led to the construction of the silos in this place could be two. The first one is the stable temperatura of the cave to preserve the grain and the second reason would be the used of the cave as a refuge in a turbulent momento of disputes between Visigoths and Muslims.

OSSUARY

In the middle of 20th centuary they made and extensión of the Hermitage lowering the floor of the final part of it. At that momento they discover empty silos and buried people. One of those silos is reused as and ossuary for the bones that appear in this space.

The bones are in the process of being studied but the archeologist situated it in 10th centuary.

HERMITAGE

We are in San Tirso and San Bernabe's hermitage. The Hermitage was originally dedicated to S.Tirso as can be seen in the paintings of the vault and in the location of the saints on the altar, San Tirso is in the middle of it.

The central part of the paintings tell us about about the 10 martyrdoms to which S.Tirso was subjected during his life. The paintings are dated in 1705 and they are by an unknow author.

The lowest part of the paintings tell us the miracles atributed to S.Tirso and S.Bernabe they are dated in 1877 and they are also by an unknow author.

The reason why we call this place San Bernabe is due to the party, we celebrate it on San Bernabe's day (11th of June). San Tirso's party is on 28th of January.

In the Hermitage we can find also the old municipality archive used for keeping the documents of the mayors.

Nowadays these documents are in the current location of the town hall in Cornejo. At the upper part of the archive we can find the original shield of Merindad de Sotoscueva.