

Totsui Limestone Cave

A narrow path winds through the Totsui Limestone Cave system, through chambers containing stalactites and stalagmites of various shapes and sizes. The cave was formed more than 250 million years ago, and the calcite formations growing on the ceiling, floor, and walls are the result of ongoing erosion and accumulating mineral deposits.

The cave entrance is in a mine shaft that was dug into the hillside during limestone mining operations in the early twentieth century. At the time, limestone was mined for use in construction and to manufacture fertilizer. However, mining at the Totsui site ceased when the cave and its formations were discovered.

The 100-meter path through the length of the cave passes through spaces tight enough to require ducking and stooping. The main chambers and noteworthy features are named to reflect the images they conjure: in the Crab Tunnel visitors must squat and inch sideways to enter the Needle Ceiling Chamber beyond, and Bee's Nest Rock is a section of wall with hexagonal dimple patterning.

The calcite formations are whiteish with a hint of color, typically orange, red, or black. Lights illuminate the formations, accentuating their details and coloration. Geologists believe the coloration is determined by minerals, and possibly acids, in the surface vegetation and soil.

The cave is usually open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekends, national holidays, during peak periods in summer, and at other times of the year. There is no public transportation to the site, and the access road is very narrow.